



INTEGRATIVE LIFE SOLUTIONS

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STEM CELLS

Six years ago I was the third office-based physician in North Carolina to use stem cells for musculoskeletal and joint injections. At that time, there were two types of preparations billed as “adult stem cells:” Bone marrow aspirate and fat derived cells. Bone marrow aspirate contained some platelet rich plasma (PRP) and other cells, but harvesting bone marrow was painful, so I preferred fat derived cells.

For each patient, I would perform a “mini liposuction,” aspirating 50 ml of subcutaneous fat, usually from the abdomen, spinning the specimen in a special centrifuge and drawing off about 5 ml of fat that supposedly had a high concentration of adult stem cells. The fat preparation and several ml of platelet rich plasma (PRP) were injected into major joints (knee, hip, shoulder) for torn cartilage, arthritis or degeneration. My results were very good, certainly a great alternative to joint replacement.

However, I was well aware of the limitations of this approach. Any stem cells that were harvested were the same age as the patient and had been exposed to the same toxins, radiation and oxidative stress as the patient. How many were viable? No way to know. How many stem cells were in the fat product? 1000? 5000? 50,000? No way to know that, either. As a physician with a background in Anesthesiology, I was uncomfortable not knowing exactly what I was administering to my patient. Practitioners in other countries who had access to fetal stem cells were reporting much better results.

Fortunately for me (and my patients), a new product is now available in the US – umbilical cord stem cells. These cells are processed from the umbilical cord blood from live births. The genetic markers and infectious agents are removed,

and the cells frozen. The vendor that I prefer, Liveyon, guarantees 30,000,000 viable cells per ml. These are brand new, pluripotent cells unlike the multipotent adult stem cells I used to harvest. There is no time-consuming and uncomfortable harvest procedure, use of PRP is optional, and the results are phenomenal.

These cells can be administered intravenously and are being used in many parts of the US for the treatment of autoimmunity, COPD, Type II diabetes, and neurodegenerative diseases with excellent results. In fact, Duke University Medical Center has recently completed a study of umbilical cord stem cells administered IV for autism, with impressive results.

The North Carolina Board of Medicine will likely frown on IV use of stem cells in non-experimental settings. But for diseases like autism, Alzheimer's, ALS and Parkinson's, which have no satisfactory traditional treatment, progress may be hard to suppress.

Providers who have invested in autologous stem cell protocols (taken from bone marrow or fat cells) may feel that using autologous cells is preferable and safer, but adult stem cells are clearly inferior, and the wave of the future is in the use of umbilical stem cells.

If you have arthritis, torn cartilage or need a joint replacement, why not consider the possibility of stem cell therapy? Call for a consultation with Dr. Skeen to see if you might be a good candidate for this revolutionary, non-surgical solution.

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